

STATE OF WASHINGTON

## INDEPENDENT SCIENCE PANEL

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July 22, 2002

The Honorable Gary Locke  
Governor of Washington  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

The Honorable Sid Snyder  
Majority Leader of the Senate  
PO Box 40482  
Olympia, WA 98504-0482

The Honorable Frank Chopp  
Speaker of the House  
324 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue East, Suite 103  
Seattle, WA 98112

Dear Governor Locke, Senator Snyder and Representative Chopp:

The Independent Science Panel (Panel) was created by the Legislature in 1998 to provide scientific review and oversight, and help ensure that sound science is used in Washington's salmon, steelhead, and trout recovery efforts. The Panel's findings are to be provided to the Governor and the Legislature. Per RCW 77.85.040, in December 2000 we provided to you a report on salmon monitoring. In 2001, SSB 5637 was passed which incorporated our recommendations. It required that a Monitoring Oversight Committee develop a comprehensive monitoring strategy and action plan for watershed health with a focus on salmon recovery by December 2002. The Legislature assigned the Panel a review and advisory role in that effort.

We believe understanding how much empirical evidence exists for expectations associated with the responses of salmon and trout to changes in their habitat is a fundamental issue for salmonid recovery and related monitoring. To help address this issue we asked Dr. Peter Bayley of Oregon State University to review the scientific literature on the subject, with special attention to experimental design and related quantitative aspects, and prepare a report of his findings and recommendations. We reviewed Dr. Bayley's report (enclosure 1) and prepared Technical Memorandum 2002-2 "*Responses of Salmon and Trout to Habitat Changes*" (enclosure 2). It summarizes our interpretation of Dr. Bayley's work and its implications for monitoring. This information has been provided to the Monitoring Oversight Committee, the Salmon Recovery Funding Board, and other parties for their consideration and use.

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Based on Technical Memorandum 2002-2 we find:

- Little empirical evidence is currently available that actually demonstrates how overall abundance of salmon changes (effects) as a result of habitat changes (causes);
- Designing adequate long-term monitoring as experiments in an adaptive management context that incorporates management and restoration actions can address cause-and-effect questions; and
- Certain habitat restoration efforts can avoid or minimize such questions and, we feel, generally benefit salmon by expanding their habitat or preventing diversion of fish (e.g., acquisitions, fish passage barrier removal, screening).

It is important to note that we are not the first to articulate conclusions like these. However, we hope that by offering these suggestions now, they will be of timely assistance to those charged with making the many hard decisions associated with salmon recovery and development of the state's monitoring strategy.

We acknowledge that the state and its salmon recovery partners have made extraordinary progress during the relatively short time the Panel has been in existence. As always, we hope our recommendations are of value to you as you continue to contend with salmon recovery and monitoring issues in the coming months and beyond.

Please contact us if you have questions about any aspect of these comments.

Sincerely,



Kenneth P. Currens, Chair  
Independent Science Panel

Enclosures

cc: Senator Marilyn Rasmussen, Chair, Senate Agriculture and International Trade Committee  
Senator Karen Fraser, Chair, Senate Environmental, Energy and Water Committee  
Senator Ken Jacobsen, Chair, Senate Natural Resources, Parks and Shoreline Committee  
Representative Kelli Linville, Chair, House Agriculture and Ecology Committee  
Representative Mark Doumit, Chair, House Natural Resources Committee